

The President. Yes, I'm familiar with it. I have two things to say about it. First of all, I sympathize with the people of California. They have a problem. The Federal Government should do more to help to stop illegal immigration and to help California bear the cost of the illegal immigrants who are there. But secondly, I don't think Proposition 187 is the way to do it. It seems to be clearly unconstitutional. And if put into effect, its primary impact would be on children: keeping children out of health clinics, which could cause public health problems in the general population; kicking children out of schools, which could turn teachers into police officers and put kids on the street where they could get in trouble and cause trouble for others, rather than in school. We already have too many kids on the street in this country.

So I think what we ought to do is to keep working on what we're doing, stiffening the Bor-

der Patrol, stiffening the sanctions on employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants, stiffening our ability to get illegal immigrants out of the work force, increasing our ability to deport people who have committed crimes who are illegal immigrants. And then the Federal Government simply must continue to do more to help California and other States deal with the corrections, the health, and the education costs of illegal immigration. I am committed to doing that. I don't think 187 is the way to do it.

Ms. Jennings. All right. Mr. President, thank you so much for giving us some of your time this morning.

The President. Thank you, Cheryl.

NOTE: The interview began at 9:59 a.m. The President spoke by telephone from the Holiday Inn in Duluth, MN.

Interview With Luis Eschegoyan of KDTV, San Francisco November 4, 1994

The President. Hello, Luis, can you hear me?

Mr. Eschegoyan. Yes, Mr. President. Good afternoon.

The President. Good afternoon.

Immigration

Mr. Eschegoyan. Thank you, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to talk to you. What is your impression of Proposition 187, included in the California ballot?

The President. I'm opposed to it. I do believe that the Federal Government has an obligation to do more to try to help California deal with the problems of illegal immigration. And I have worked hard on that, along with Senator Feinstein and Senator Boxer. We've almost doubled the border guards in southern California; we have increased our sending the illegal immigrants who have been convicted of crimes back home. We've given money to California for the very first time to deal with the costs of imprisonment.

I've tried to get much more money for education and health care costs of immigration to California. But 187 operates primarily against children. It says, kick the children out of the health clinics. That could cause health problems

for the general population. It says, kick the children out of the schools, which means teachers are turned into police officers. It means that the kids can be on the street causing problems for themselves and for others. We've already got too many children on the street.

So I believe we have to do more. I'm working hard. I found a big immigration mess when I became President 21 months ago. But this is not the answer, in my opinion, and I hope the voters will turn out and vote and reject 187. It's a way of dividing our people, it's clearly unconstitutional, and it's looking for easy answers to a tough problem. After all, some of the people that are for 187 are part of the problem. When Governor Wilson was Senator Wilson, he responded to the powerful forces in California that wanted more illegal immigrants in California to do work. He sponsored legislation to make it more difficult to remove illegal immigrants from the workplace by going easier on the employers. Now he, all of a sudden, has turned 180 degrees on this issue. But this is a complicated issue without a simple solution. I'm committed to working with you to find a solution. I don't think 187 is the answer.

I hope that our listeners, our viewers, will turn out and vote on Tuesday and vote against 187, and I hope they'll come to the Kaiser Center in Oakland tomorrow where I'm going to have a rally at 2 o'clock.

Mr. Eschegoyan. Mr. President, if 187 is approved, do you think it will affect the NAFTA treaty with Mexico?

The President. I don't know that it will affect NAFTA, but it will certainly affect our relations with Mexico. You know, in the long run, the best way to reduce illegal immigration is for more people in Mexico and these other countries to have good jobs in their own countries, to trade with us, to sell to us and buy from us, and live in stable societies.

California has benefited more from NAFTA than any other State, with the possible exception of Texas. It has brought us increased numbers of new jobs and new opportunities. And as it raises incomes in Mexico, clearly, illegal immigration will slow because there will be more job opportunities at home. People like to stay with their families and where they grew up, if they can make a living.

Mr. Eschegoyan. Thank you, Mr. President, to talk to us here at KDTV, Channel 14, in San Francisco.

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. by telephone from the Holiday Inn in Duluth, MN.

Interview With Jim Dunbar of KGO Radio, San Francisco, California November 4, 1994

Mr. Dunbar. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. How are you?

Health Care Reform

Mr. Dunbar. I'm Jim Dunbar, and I'm just fine. And it's a privilege having the opportunity to talk to you. I've got a couple of questions that I hope you haven't heard thus far this morning.

Yesterday it was announced that the First Lady was stepping aside as the administration's main point person on health care reform. Sir, is this a concession on your part that maybe she was just a little too visible in her efforts to get the health care package through Congress?

The President. No. I don't think that's right at all. What happened, I think—keep in mind, we took this health care debate further than it had ever been taken in American history. For 60 years, Presidents have tried to solve the health care problem, to secure the health insurance of people who had it, and to cover—help people who didn't and to bring costs in line. And for 60 years, they failed because of the power of the organized health care interests. This is the first time we ever got a bill to both Houses of the Congress. We could have passed the bill this year if the Republicans had been willing to work with us in a bipartisan manner.

But they abandoned their commitment to health care reform and decided to play politics with it instead.

Mr. Dunbar. Are you going to let it rest for awhile, or are you going to go right back at it?

The President. No, we're going to try to—what I have to do now is to figure out how we can go at it in a way that will make our plan less vulnerable to the \$200 million or so that was spent to characterize it as a big Government plan that reduces choices for people who have health insurance. The truth is, our plan lets you keep what you have. It relies on private insurance, not the Government, and it protects people from losing their insurance. It covers people who don't. And then it gives small business people and farmers and individual people the opportunity to buy health care on the same basis as people who are in big businesses or Government. That's what we need to do.

And I just need to go back at it in a way that is less vulnerable to the interest groups attacking it. But let me say, it's come out just since we stopped our health care efforts, because we couldn't pass it through Congress, another million Americans in working families lost their health insurance last year. We are the only advanced country in the world, the only one,